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N.Y. Times reporter visits AFRL technologies



WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — 2nd Lt. Jonathan Lee, AFRL Human Effectiveness Directorate, explains advancements made to the Battlefield Air Operations Kit to New York Times reporter Eric Schmitt, during a media visit to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base July 30. The Battlefield Air Operations Kit, featured during the interview, is used by Air Force combat controllers for close air support. The Human Effectiveness Directorate, along with the Sensors and Propulsion Directorates are working together to refine and integrate equipment inside the Phase I kit to increase accuracy and reduce weight and downtime. Items in the Phase I kit include technology upgrades to laser range finders/designators, thermal imagers and toughbook computers to assist controllers in computational tasks for targeting. The Human Effectiveness Directorate is the lead integrator between the directorates, advancing technologies like custom-molded earplugs to ensure that systems are conformed around the human body. The Propulsion Directorate, represented by Capt. David Pfahler during the interview, is developing a power system for the kit aimed at reducing battery weight by 50% and boosting reliability and capability.

MSgt. David Coates, Sensors Directorate, demonstrated the Ke-Co switch, part of the Phase I kit. The switch allows ground forces to set up both antennas remotely via coaxial cables, improving mobility and reducing the chances that special forces will be seen or heard by the enemy. The Ke-Co Switch was successfully used during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Mike Kelly)